

It's a Girl's Job After All!

When I was four years old, so my mother says, and we were visiting my grandparents, I announced one Sunday afternoon that we were going to have church and I was going to preach. I marched my grandparents, my parents, and my two-year-old sister into the bedroom and seated them in a line at the foot of my grandmother's bed. I stood on a stool in front of them, opened the Bible, and said "Great American people!" No one remembers anything else about that first sermon of mine, but they all remember that my squirming sister managed to crawl over the side and under the bed, escaping from the room.

That was in 1948, and it did not occur to anyone in that room to think that I might actually grow up to be a preacher. And yet, as this issue of *Circuit Rider* comes off the press, I will be celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of my first ordination. It has been a long journey and the articles in this issue bring back many of my experiences and feelings during those years. Soomee Kim speaks for many of us when she says, "Connectionalism, in combination with the itinerant system . . . allowed me to experience a life and ministry beyond my wildest imagination."

I hope that you, too, whether you are women who have experienced the joys and challenges of this vocation or men who have supported and cheered us on, will see familiar landmarks as you read this issue. You will find stories of women as far back as 1787 who have provided firm ground on which to stand; women of our own lifetime, like Marjorie Matthews and Leontine T.C. Kelly, whose lives and work gave momentum to our own; glimpses of surprising changes in the present (who would have thought we not only could get there ourselves but also might even help shape a new reality!); and hopeful signs for our future and the future of our children.

Sometimes the challenges loom so large that they prevent us from seeing the signs of God's transforming presence right in our midst, but as you read you will find them on every page. And when you have finished reading, look around and give God thanks and praise for our sisters and daughters who, now and in the future, will preach the Good News of Jesus Christ to a hurting world.

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